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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 000094

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [EAID](#) [KTFN](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#) [YM](#) [KU](#)  
SUBJECT: A/S FELTMAN DISCUSSES IRAQ, IRAN, MEPP, AND YEMEN  
WITH KUWAITI FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: A. KUWAIT 23  
[B](#). KUWAIT 53  
[C](#). KUWAIT 36

Classified By: Economic Counselor Oliver John for reasons 1.4 (b), (d),  
(e).

[1](#). (C) Key points:

- A/S Feltman noted he'd accompanied Vice President Biden to Iraq, where he continued to encourage political reconciliation. The A/S suggested movement on Chapter VII issues involving Kuwait was more likely following the March elections, but said he had pressed Iraq to name an Ambassador to Kuwait. Dr. Mohammed noted Kuwait's concern about Iranian influence in Iraq and asked whether POTUS' call for Iranian engagement had shifted; A/S Feltman noted an increasing blow back from Iraqi Shi'a towards Iran and foreshadowed a sharper US policy toward Iran;

- The FM said Kuwait would provide an additional USD \$50 million to the World Bank Trust Fund for the Palestinian Authority, and expressed doubts about recent efforts towards the Middle East Peace Process; A/S Feltman thanked Kuwait for its generous support and stated that the picture, while complicated, included more positive elements such as contacts at the sub-negotiating level;

- The FM announced his plans to travel to London for the Yemen and Afghanistan conference on January 26, including a meeting with Secretary Clinton on January 27. He will attend the Friends of Afghanistan meeting as well as the GCC lunch (ref b). End Summary and Key Points.

[2](#). (SBU) On January 25, A/S Jeffrey Feltman accompanied by Ambassador, Peter Vrooman, NSC Director for Iraq, and Econoff (note taker) met with Kuwaiti FM Dr. Mohammed Al Sabah.

Where is Iraq's Ambassador to Kuwait?

[3](#). (C) A/S Feltman briefed the FM on Vice President Biden's visit to Baghdad, including details about the US-Iraq Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) on Political and Diplomatic issues. A/S Feltman noted the purpose of the JCC was to develop a strategic dialogue with Iraq similar to what we already enjoy with Kuwait. A/S Feltman suggested it would be difficult to move forward on Kuwait's basket of Chapter VII issues until after the Iraq elections in March, although he had urged Iraq Foreign Minister Zebari to send an Ambassador to Kuwait as this was essential to moving other important discussions forward.

[4](#). (C) Dr. Mohammed expressed concern over the negative Kuwait narrative in the Iraqi press and from some GoI officials. He lamented what he described as the Iraqis 'singular focus' on debt and compensation issues while

failing to see the linkages (given Kuwait's parliament) to their Chapter VII obligations. Despite Iraq's lack of cooperation, the FM said Kuwait is reaching out to Iraqi politicians as part of a strategy of active engagement, citing the recent visits of ISCI leader Ammar Al Hakim, Sunni Arab Vice President Al Hashemi, Speaker Sammarraie, and Sheikh Abdullah of the Shammar Tribe in Ninewa. Improving Kuwait-Basra relations is of particular focus for the GoK, he added, and Governor Al Miyahi of Basra (Da'wa party) paid a successful visit to Kuwait on January 17.

15. (C) In an effort to create goodwill, Dr. Mohammed said Kuwait had donated USD \$1 Million to the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights for the purpose of capacity building in their effort to identify the remains of missing persons (Both Iraqi and Kuwaiti). Vrooman noted that the Iraqi minister of Human Rights had informed the U.S. Vice President that her ministry was pursuing the cases of Kuwaiti missing persons. Iraqi FM Zebari also reaffirmed to A/S Feltman on January 24 that Iraq remained committed to follow-up on Kuwaiti missing persons and properties even as other issues remained on hold. (Note: The Kuwaitis are frustrated by the lack of concrete results in this area, see ref. c. End Note).

#### Concern over Iran

16. (C) The FM sought A/S Feltman's assessment of continuing Iranian influence in Iraq. A/S Feltman stressed that the Iraqis themselves believe their neighbors are meddling and suggested that the Al-Fakka oil incursion might have unified Iraqis in opposition to Iran. A/S Feltman offered his sense,

KUWAIT 00000094 002 OF 002

based on conversations in Baghdad and elsewhere, that Iraqi Shi'a were now emphasizing their national Arab Iraqi identity.

17. (C) Dr. Mohammed questioned whether the Administration's engagement policy remained unchanged in light of Iran's failure to respond positively to previous proposals. A/S Feltman acknowledged that Iran had failed to respond positively to U.S. offer on engagement. A/S Feltman foreshadowed a sharper USG approach towards Iran, in response to the lack of a positive Iranian response to the international community's efforts on engagement. Foreign Minister Dr. Mohammed replied "it is very important to have international solidarity on the Iran issue".

#### Status of Middle East Peace Process

18. (C) A/S Feltman thanked Dr. Mohammed for Kuwait's contribution to the Palestine Authority through the World Bank trust fund. Dr. Mohammed said he would announce the GoK's plan to provide another USD \$50 million contribution after the government dealt with Kuwait's parliament on its recent controversial legislation concerning personal debt relief. Dr. Mohammed noted his concerns about the effectiveness of the recent Senator Mitchell visit. A/S Feltman responded that there had more contact at the sub-negotiation level, which has created some positive momentum. Nonetheless, he acknowledged that real progress won't be made until the parties come to the negotiating table.

19. (C) Dr. Mohammed mentioned a recent meeting he had with Palestine Authority President Mahmoud Abbas (ref a) followed by a meeting with Hamas leader Khaled Meshal. Meshal claimed he was not an Iranian puppet and that he remained very interested in Palestinian reconciliation. During that meeting the FM said Meshal asserted that Hamas was not opposed to Egyptian mediation.

Yemen - not a failed state

10. (C) A/S Feltman conveyed USG expectations for the

upcoming London conference regarding Yemen, which was to boost support for security and development. The Foreign Minister asked whether the USG supported British Foreign Minister Miliband's position that Yemen is a failed state. A/S Feltman responded by saying that the U.S. did not characterize Yemen as such, but stressed the need to include political and developmental dimensions along with support for the military. The FM said that GoK was told that Houthi militants were Hezbollah in the making and receiving support for Iran. A/S Feltman said that may be the case but the U.S. had not yet seen intelligence or evidence to support this contention.

¶11. (U) This cable has been cleared by A/S Feltman.

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